

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image processing apparatus comprising:  
an input unit for inputting image data;  
first discrimination means for discriminating  
5 whether or not specific digital watermark information  
is embedded in the image data inputted by said input  
unit;  
second discrimination means for discriminating  
similarity between a feature obtained from the image  
10 data inputted by said input unit, and a feature of a  
specific image;  
setting means for setting the presence/absence of  
execution and an execution order of said first and  
second discrimination means; and  
15 control means for controlling operations of said  
first and second discrimination means in accordance  
with a setting state of said setting means and  
controlling a process of the image data on the basis of  
the discrimination results of said first and second  
20 discrimination means.
2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when  
said first discrimination means determines that the  
specific digital watermark information is embedded in  
the image data or when said second discrimination means  
25 determines that the similarity between the features of  
the image data and specific image data is high, said

control means prevents faithful reproduction of the image data.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising storage means for storing the image data inputted by said input unit, and wherein said first and second discrimination means discriminate the image data stored in said storage means.

4. An image processing apparatus comprising:  
discrimination means for discriminating using a plurality of different discrimination processes whether or not image data is a specific image; and  
control means for controlling a process of the image data in accordance with a discrimination result of said discrimination means,

15 wherein said discrimination means executes at least a discrimination process for discriminating whether or not specific digital watermark information is embedded in the image data.

5. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said discrimination means executes at least a discrimination process for discriminating similarity between a feature obtained from the image data, and a feature of a specific image which is set in advance.

6. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein an arbitrary discrimination process of the plurality of

different discrimination processes executed by said discrimination means can be selected.

7. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein an order of the plurality of different discrimination processes executed by said discrimination means can be set.

8. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein when it is determined in at least one of the plurality of different discrimination processes that an input image is a specific image, said discrimination means aborts other discrimination processes.

9. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein only when it is determined in a first discrimination process of the plurality of different discrimination processes that an input image is a specific image, said discrimination means executes a second discrimination process.

10. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein when image data inputted by input means is a specific image, said control means executes one of control for inhibiting the image data from being stored in storage means, control for modifying the image data and storing the modified image data in the storage means, control for erasing the image data temporarily stored in the storage means, and control for modifying the image data

temporarily stored in the storage means and re-storing the modified image data in the storage means.

11. An image processing method comprising:

an input step of inputting image data;

5 a first discrimination step of discriminating whether or not specific digital watermark information is embedded in the image data inputted at said input step;

10 a second discrimination step of discriminating similarity between a feature obtained from the image data inputted at said input step, and a feature of a specific image;

a setting step of setting the presence/absence of execution and an execution order of said first and  
15 second discrimination step; and

a control step of controlling operations of said first and second discrimination step in accordance with a setting state of said setting step and controlling a process of the image data on the basis of the  
20 discrimination results of said first and second discrimination step.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein when at said first discrimination step it is determined that the specific digital watermark information is embedded  
25 in the image data or when at said second discrimination step it is determined that the similarity between the

features of the image data and specific image data is high, faithful reproduction of the image data is prevented at said control step.

13. The method according to claim 11, further comprising a storage step of storing the image data inputted at said input step, and wherein at said first and second discrimination step the image data stored at said storage step is discriminated.

14. An image processing method comprising:  
10 a discrimination step of discriminating using a plurality of different discrimination processes whether or not image data is a specific image; and

a control step of controlling a process of the image data in accordance with a discrimination result  
15 of the discrimination step,

wherein the discrimination step includes the step of executing at least a discrimination process for discriminating whether or not specific digital watermark information is embedded in the image data.

20 15. A computer readable memory that stores an image processing program,

said image processing program including:

a program code of an input step of inputting image data;

25 a program code of a first discrimination step of discriminating whether or not specific digital

watermark information is embedded in the image data  
inputted at said input step;

5 a program code of a second discrimination step of  
discriminating similarity between a feature obtained  
from the image data inputted at said input step, and a  
feature of a specific image;

a program code of a setting step of setting the  
presence/absence of execution and an execution order of  
said first and second discrimination step; and

10 a program code of a control step of controlling  
operations of said first and second discrimination step  
in accordance with a setting state of said setting step  
and controlling a process of the image data on the  
basis of the discrimination results of said first and  
15 second discrimination step.

16. The computer readable memory according to claim  
15, wherein when at said first discrimination step it  
is determined that the specific digital watermark  
information is embedded in the image data or when at  
20 said second discrimination step it is determined that  
the similarity between the features of the image data  
and specific image data is high, faithful reproduction  
of the image data is prevented at said control step.

17. The computer readable memory according to claim  
25 11, said image processing program further including a  
program code of a storage step of storing the image

data inputted at said input step, and wherein at said first and second discrimination step the image data stored at said storage step is discriminated.

18. A computer readable memory that stores an image processing program which can process a specific image, said image processing program including:

a program code of a discrimination step of discriminating using a plurality of different discrimination processes whether or not image data is a specific image; and

a program code of a control step of controlling a process of the image data in accordance with a discrimination result of the discrimination step, wherein the program code of the discrimination step includes at least a discrimination process program code for discriminating whether or not specific digital watermark information is embedded in the image data.